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A study of the most important risk factors of motivational deficiencies in university students

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Abstract

Objectives: This Study was carried out to determine the most important risk factors of motivational deficiencies among university students.

Material & Methods: Two hundred seventy two students (124 male and 148 female) aged 18-25 from different colleges of Yazd University of Medical Sciences in Iran took part in this study. The employed questionnaire incorporated four groups of motivational factors including: 1) basic physiological needs, 2) psychosocial growth needs, 3) spiritual needs and 4) educational needs. The obtained data were analyzed using means ranking and analysis of variance.

Results: The findings of this study indicated that the Anticipation of no appropriate access to basic physiological needs such as achieving welfare facilities, suitable and fit Job and income, as well as students' dissatisfaction with the university's present educational services and facilities have all equally led to remarkable motivational deficiencies.

Conclusion: Motivational deficiencies may potentially lead to pessimism, anxiety, depression and disturbed mental health as well as poor academic performance in students.

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Keywords: Motivation, Deficiencies, Risk Factors, University Students, Mental Health

1. Introduction

Any kind of effort in order to understand human being's complex behavior in two aspects of health and disease should be confronted to motivation. because every deficiency in this important mental factor in the dimension of thought results to main problems in the dimensions of emotion and behavior and the preparations of pessimism, stress and even depression and also striking decline in personal, social and vocational performances (Bateman, Brown & Pedder, 2000). Motivation is a type of mental force which in a conscious or unconscious manner drives the person to the special kind of behavior and performance so as to satisfy physiological, psychological and social needs (Corsini, 1999). These needs forced the person to do various activities via inner pressure. But, if a person concludes that for instance his educational or vocational activities would not leads to having accessed to their purposes and needs, the above-mentioned psychological force will be undermined and motivational deficiency will occur. Inefficient educational performances of university students derives from various complex factors among them but motivational deficiencies is one of the most important resources (Thies & Travers, 2002, Anderman, Griesinger

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& Westerfield, 1998). The purpose of this study is assessment of most important risk factors of motivational deficiencies in university students.

Researchers regularly in order to explain all types of behaviors use two groups of motivational factors. The first group named the motivations based on the deficiency needs which is the consequence of basic physiological needs like food, sleep, sex, drug, dwelling and etc.

Turner (1995) believe that expectation of not having access to a suitable job through an important damage to the self-esteem leads to depression and its behavioral consequences. Kasser & Ryan (1993) also believe that financial pressures will arise the risk of stress, depression and the negative motivational consequences.

Accordingly, the fear of low income especially in men is one of the serious resources of motivational damages, mental disturbances and inappropriate performance (Lachman & Weaver, 1998).

The second group of motivational factors includes the ones based on growth needs. In this situation person without any feelings of a kind of physiological need is motivated merely with the psychosocial growth.

Some researchers believe that educational motivations are generally influenced by having access to a higher socially ranked job not merely earning more income (Ross & van Willigen, 1997).

Luke (1996) in a hypothesis, which he named purpose based theory, reminds that possessing defined purposes and actions towards reaching these purposes is the most motivational factor which oriented the behavior. Accordingly, a need to progress, especially in educational and vocational activities is among the most important motivations which set the power and direction of behaviors (Statt, 1994 and Schmidt & Frieze 1997).

Of course in the etiology of various behaviors like educational activities, also other factors are involved. These factors are including spiritual motivations and motivations related to quality of educational facilities which are considered in this research.

Methodology

The research sample is including 272 university students (124 male and 148 female) in the age range of 18 to 25 from the schools of medicine, health, paramedical and nursing of Yazd medical university. The subjects have been chosen by the cluster sampling method. After the random choosing of several classes, among the students of each class, some of them through the simple random sampling were chosen and completed the questionnaire.

In this research, as the result of not having access to the made scales, the used questionnaire are provided and edited by the research group in which there is an effort in order to include all recognized motivations based on existed scientific texts. Accordingly, the first four statements include the motivations are related to the most important primary and secondary physiologic (deficiency) needs, the second four statements are related to motivations based on needs which are prominent in psychosocial growth, the third four statements include a sample of spiritual motivations and at last four statements are based on the most important educational needs (table 1).

Table 1: The items of study including factors influencing students' motivation of academic performance.

A- Basic Physiologic needs

- 1) Help to achieving welfare facilities.
- 2) Help to achieving fit job and income.
- 3) Help to more possibility of better marriage.
- 4) Help to achieving appropriate health

B- Psychosocial growth needs

- 1) Help to achieving self-esteem and respect.
- 2) Help to achieving progress and superiority.
- 3) Help to achieving higher vocational dignity.
- 4) Help to achieving fame and social influence

C- Spiritual needs

- 1) Help to achieving a sense of virtue.
- 2) Help to achieving altruism and help others.
- 3) Help to achieving an honourable life.
- 4) Help to achieving a powerful perception of God.

D- Educational needs

- 1) Suitability of educational equipments.
- 2) Suitability of scientific condition of instructors.
- 3) Suitability of educational technology.
- 4) Suitability of regulations or requirements.

Reliability of these four sections of the questionnaire in one 30 persons group were 0.80 .0.79, 0.87 and 0.81. Validity of the content of the questionnaire has also verified by 6 professional psychologist and psychiatrist judges who all recognized the scales' suitable with almost high rate of consensus.

Grading the questionnaire has been done by the use of one Likert scale in a way that in the exchange for each statement "always" receives grade 3, "sometimes" receives grade 2, "rarely" receives grade 1 and "never" receives 0 and as a result, the grade of each statement fluctuate between 0 to 3. The grade lower than 50% Cut of Point (grade lower than 1.5) in every motivational factor related to physiologic, growth, spiritual and educational needs indicated that students' believes that academic activity does not leads to desirable satisfaction of these needs. Therefore, that factor in causing damages to their motivational system has a more importance effect and so, it can have a negative influence on the current academic performance. The data of the research have been analyzed by use of ranking the means and analysis of variance.

Findings

In the table 2 ranking the influential factors on the motivational damages in all of the participants is indicated. The attention to 50% Cut of Point indicates the importance of two physiologic and every four educational factors which can cause more motivational damages to university students. Attaining the help to the others (altruism) from the spiritual motivations group also in all participants has been borne the least motivational damages.

Table 2: Ranking the means of factors influencing students' motivation of academic performance.

Rank	Factor	M (SD)
1	Help to achieving welfare facilities.	0.69 (0.60)
2	Help to achieving fit job and income.	1.07 (0.69)
3	Suitability of educational equipments.	1.25 (0.81)
4	Suitability of scientific condition of instructors.	1.32 (0.76)
5	Suitability of regulations or requirements.	1.33 (0.89)
6	Suitability of educational technology.	1.40 (0.76)*
7	Help to achieving fame and social influence.	1.57 (0.82)
8	Help to achieving higher vocational dignity.	1.61 (0.74)
9	Help to achieving appropriate health.	1.71 (0.93)
10	Help to more possibility of better marriage.	1.73 (0.88)
11	Help to achieving an honourable life.	1.73 (0.79)
12	Help to achieving a sense of virtue.	1.83 (0.83)
13	Help to achieving progress and superiority.	1.98 (0.74)
14	Help to achieving a powerful perception of God.	2.05 (0.90)
15	Help to achieving self-esteem and respect.	2.08 (0.78)
16	Help to achieving altruism and help others.	2.13 (0.84)

* 50% Cut of Point

Table 3 indicates the means and variances related to the four groups of motivational factors in different colleges and the comparison of accounted differences among these groups. As we see in this table, in all these considered groups, the basic physiologic and the educational motivations generally gained the means lower than 1.5 which is indicative of more importance of these factors in causing damages to motivation of university students. In the meantime medical and nursing students indicate significantly more damages in educational motivation in comparison to other groups ($p < 0.05$). The difference among groups in physiologic, the psychosocial growth and spiritual motivation aren't significant in a way that in all groups, equally, the physiologic motivations in comparison to the motivations of psychosocial growth and spiritual are more damaged.

Table 3: comparison of achieving scores of motivational factors in four groups

Factors Groups	Basic Physiologic needs M (SD)	Psychosocial growth needs M (SD)	Spiritual needs M (SD)	Educational needs M (SD)
Medicine college	1.43 (0.74)	1.87 (0.77)	2.01 (0.85)	1.10 (0.73)
Health college	1.28 (1.02)	1.82 (0.82)	1.88 (0.86)	1.38 (0.91)
Paramedical college	1.17 (0.66)	1.77 (0.74)	1.99 (0.78)	1.51 (1.77)
Nursing college	1.42 (0.68)	1.78 (0.73)	1.76 (0.91)	1.16 (0.75)
Result of Analysis of Variance	0.212 (NS)	0.723 (NS)	0.418 (NS)	0.012 (S)

Discussion

According to the results, it seems that pessimistic attitude of the students towards the quality of estimation of basic physiologic needs specially achieving welfare and suitable job and income in the future has the most important role

in the motivational damage to them.

According to Abraham Maslow until physiologic needs does not eliminated prominently and a kind of confidence towards this does not happen, regarding the growth needs will not devoted (Eysenck & Flanagan, 2000, Argyle, 2001). A variety of researches show that pessimistic attitude towards the future, specially related to some important issues like vocational and financial ones, caused the prominent damage to the mental health (Robinson wheeler et al. 1997). In reverse, the optimistic attitude towards the future caused the less stress, improving the immunity system and more suitable physical, mental and behavioral performance (Segerstrom et al. 1998).

Solas (1996) in a research on students concluded that financial and economic factors are among the most important motivations of students, because these factors indirectly have relation to their fundamental needs. Coordinated with the Luke's purpose based theory (1996), the results of some of the researches indicate that the incarnation of the one's basic needs in the future and believe more probability in order to having access to these purposes, increase the students' motivations for more activity at present (Hirsch 2001). In reality, the excepting for access to the purposes will help to keep the feeling of hope and freshness and preventing apathy and depression and organizing the daily activities (Cantor & Sanderson, 1997).

It seems that good financial position, starting marriage and having a proper job which are all among the basic physiologic needs are some of the most important motivational factors (Berger, 2001).

The results of this research are also indicating that no satisfied university students' educational needs have an important role in their motivational deficiency. As the researchers believe, motivation has different stages and the first stage which is regarded as the first reason of performance is the tendency to searching and curiosity (Beth Early, 2000). Barbara Fredrickson (1998) in her researches understood that the positive excitements specially being interested, is the reason of more tendency to search and curiosity, discovering new and creative ideas and development of thought and performance.

Whenever the educational facilities don't have enough attraction to motivate the students, certainly they will have influence in damaging their motivation. Ekman & Freisen (1986) believe that emotions play an important role in human motivational system in a way that emotions like pleasure, interest, surprise and happiness which all can be achieved from the proper educational facilities may motivate and consequently increase the scientific and academic activities. In reverse, emotions like disgust, fear anger and depression, which should be caused by unsuitable

educational facilities and environment, can damage and decrease university students' motivation. Some researchers believe that an inefficient educational service is one of the important resources of motivational deficiency in university students (Porter, Alder & Abraham, 1999).

One considerable point in the conclusion of research is that in all regarded groups, the factors related to psychosocial growth and spiritual motivations have bore the less damage. Also among spiritual motivations the factor of helping others have bore the least damage. This conclusion coordinates with the research, which had been done by Todisco, Hayes & Farnill (1995). This research indicated that for university students finding a proper opportunity to help others is among the most important motivational factors.

In brief, it seems those university students' pessimistic attitudes towards the satisfaction of their basic needs in the future and not getting satisfied of current educational services via establishing of indifference and even depression, are among the most important damaging factors to the students' motivation. Accordingly it is proposed in order to doing necessary programming to preventing interventions by educational and health professionals.

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